

Sample Reports

Assessing Graduate MA and PhD Programs

Outcomes

Most graduate programs have versions of these three outcomes:

- 1) Conduct original work in the field or complete a substantial project related to the field
- 2) Demonstrate ability to carry out professional responsibilities in an ethical manner
- 3) Master and be able to apply concepts, information, and methods in the field.

These should be phrased in a way that is discipline-specific

Measure	Outcome	Use
Student thesis or other substantial project, evaluated by faculty who oversee the work. These faculty submit an analysis of strengths and weaknesses for the students under their supervision, using a set of criteria developed by the department	1, 3	Aggregated results are presented to the department for action at the annual assessment meeting
Internship or practicum supervisor reports, aggregated	2, 3	As above
Graduate student exit interviews	1, 2, 3	As above

<http://www.gradschool.cornell.edu/academics/learning-assessment/doctoral-proficiencies>

Example: A social sciences department examined its students' comprehensive exams and dissertations as well as their conference presentations and publications. The graduate school conducted exit interviews with graduate students of all disciplines, trying to capture information from those who dropped out as well as those who completed the degree. In its annual meeting, the graduate faculty each presented a list of strengths and weaknesses they found in working with students' exams and dissertations. They made a common list. They also analyzed exit interview data. Their action item was to try to increase the number of publications their graduate students produced. They talked with graduate students about strategies and decided to introduce a one-credit seminar on publication that was voluntary for the pilot year and subsequently was required for all their doctoral candidates. The number of publications rose significantly.

Sample Annual Report



Annual Report on Program Learning Outcomes Assessment

Program: *PhD in XXXXXX*

Program Contact and Title: *Professor John Smith, Chair, jsmith@bu.edu*

College/School Contact and Title: *Professor Jane Doe, Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, jdoe@bu.edu*

Date: *November 15, 2015*

1. List the learning outcomes for the program:

Students completing the PhD degree in XXXX will demonstrate the ability to

- conduct original, publishable research in the field of XXXX
- carry out professional responsibilities such as teaching and research in an ethical manner
- integrate and apply key concepts, information, and methods of XXXXX into their work.

2. Where are these outcomes published?

Provost's Program Learning Outcomes Assessment website:

<http://www.bu.edu/provost/resources/program-learning-outcomes-assessment/learning-outcomes-by-program/>

Department website: xxxxxxxxx.bu.edu

3. How do you determine whether learning outcomes have been achieved?

The department will consider students' comprehensive exams and dissertations as well as their publications and conference presentations for evidence of all three learning outcomes. In addition, the department will analyze data from the graduate school's exit interview of all graduate students as it applies to the department's learning outcomes.

a. What evidence do/will you gather?

- i. **What evidence do you currently have available to begin assessment, or what do you currently use?**
Comprehensive exams, dissertations, conference presentations, publications, and exit interview data
- ii. **What tools might you like to implement and/or what materials would you like to gather in the future to improve program assessment?**

In the future, we would like to systematically observe and evaluate graduate student teaching as a way of assessing professional preparation (outcome 2).

b. Who interprets the evidence?

At the annual assessment meeting on May 15, the graduate faculty each presented a list of strengths and weaknesses they found in working with students' comprehensive exams and dissertations. They also analyzed exit interview data.

4. Please list the dates of the most recent program reviews and indicate other venues in which you've discussed program learning outcomes:

a. External accreditation review, if applicable:

b. Internal (department, school/college, or overseer), if applicable:

c. Internal (Provost's academic program review, a.k.a. APR):

d. Other discussions:

5. Have you made curricular changes as a result of the information gleaned? If so, what?

At their most recent meeting, the graduate faculty concluded that steps should be taken to increase the number of publications produced by graduate students. After talking with current students about strategies to do this, the department decided to introduce a one-credit seminar on publication that will be voluntary during the first year, and subsequently required of all graduate students. The department will monitor changes in number of student publications as a result.

6. All programs must have assessed all outcomes and acted upon their assessments by May 2017. Please project a schedule, year by year, for an annual cycle of assessment for your program.

2014-2015 Outcomes 1,2, and 3: Review of comprehensive exams and dissertations, student publications, conference presentations, and exit interviews

2015-2016 Outcome 3: Comprehensive exams
Continue tracking number of student publications

2016-2017 Outcome 2: Teaching observations
Continue tracking number of student publications
Follow-up on action item following review of comprehensive exams